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Shuster to Announce Funding to Help At-Risk Youth, Improve Community Spirit and Revitalize Sections of Altoona

Washington, D.C. – Today, **Congressman Bill Shuster** joined local community leaders and elected officials in the Lower Fairview section of Altoona to announce \$442,500 in federal funding to help at-risk youth, reduce drug crime and improve sections of the City of Altoona.

“The funding I secured for these projects will be put to good use immediately to improve the lives of hundreds of children and their families in the Altoona area,” Shuster said. “I am encouraged by the dedication I see in everyone who has been involved in these projects and their unceasing commitment to improving their community. These are worthy projects that I am proud to support.”

Congressman Shuster secured funding for these endeavors through the Omnibus Appropriations Act, which was signed into law earlier this month. The projects include \$71,250 for the Pleasant Valley Assembly of God’s Nehemiah Project which is focused on rehabilitating an abandoned church into a community center in the Lower Fairview section of Altoona; \$71,250 for the development of a multi-faceted outdoor park including a playground, skate-park and walking track for Altoona’s youth; and \$300,000 to assist Operation Our Town in their continuing efforts to halt illicit drug use and gang related crime.

"The Nehemiah Project, a faith-based community redevelopment organization birthed out of PVAG's 11th Street Project, would like to thank Congressman Shuster for his support of this incredible journey of faith," said James Balzano, President of the Nehemiah Project. "Even though PVAG has invested over \$500,000.00 and countless hours of labor into the project, it would be more difficult without the help of other partners in the community. Congressman Shuster's commitment to this project will help us provide a healthy, safe and educational environment for the children of Lower Fairview."

“The Blair Bike and Board Group would like to thank Congressman Shuster for his ongoing support of the Altoona Recreational Facility,” said Tim Boland, President of the Blair Bike and Board Group. “The Congressman’s support of the proposed recreational facility, which includes a skate-park, playground, walking track, and pavilions, demonstrates his dedication to the youth and families of Blair County and his commitment to bring our federal tax dollars home.”

“The Central Blair Recreation and Park Commission would like to thank Congressman Shuster for his continued support of recreation and parks in Blair County. The Congressman's support of the proposed skate park shows his dedication to the youth in our community. This grant will allow Blair Bike and Board and the Central Blair Recreation and Park Commission the opportunity to move this project out of design stage and into development,” said K. Michael Hofer, Executive Director, Central Blair Recreation and Park Commission.

“Operation Our Town is grateful to receive this funding and would like to recognize the efforts of Congressman Shuster and Senators Specter and Casey,” said Operation Our Town President Michael A. Fiore. “This funding will build on law enforcement successes so far in eradicating drugs and crime in Blair County. In addition, this funding will be used for education, prevention and to reduce the blight in some of our most troubled neighborhoods, restoring pride in our area and making these communities more resilient against drugs and gangs.”

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